

ORV Advisory Committee Protocols
Adopted 2007 – 2009, Revised and Approved May 15, 2012

A. Working Principles and Ground Rules

In order to accomplish the purposes of building cooperative working relationships among Big Cypress stakeholder communities that will last far beyond the life of the committee and setting aside past conflicts or adversarial relationships to help the Committee move forward toward lasting outcomes, the ORVAC committee members have adopted the following working principles and ground rules:

1. Commit to participate in good faith and devote the time necessary to contribute meaningfully to the process, including attending meetings faithfully and reviewing material provided in advance so as to arrive prepared.
2. Recognize that each participant brings to the table different perspectives, interests, and values. Be open-minded and receptive of the ideas and views of fellow Committee members and the public, and be honest, transparent, and specific about your own concerns or interests.
3. Listen! Be attentive and respectfully listen to fellow Committee members and the public, even a lone voice.
4. Never engage in personal criticism or harassment. Focus on issues, not personalities.
5. Speak only when recognized and allow others to finish speaking without interruption before seeking recognition. Be concise and deliver comments succinctly so all will have an opportunity to speak.
6. Avoid assigning or presuming another person's intentions. Seek clarification.
7. Take personal responsibility for reviewing Committee notes and minutes to assure your comments are accurately recorded.
8. If not in agreement with a proposed recommendation, solution, or outcome, present an alternative that reflects and incorporates, to the extent possible, the needs and desires of other Committee members and the public, consistent with the NPS mission. Build upon the ideas of others in a collaborative manner. Look for a "win-win" solution that incorporates diverse perspectives and draws on the best ideas of all.
9. Stay focused on the official agenda for each meeting. If you have other issues to bring up, explain how they connect to the agenda, or request that they are placed on an addendum to the agenda (time permitting) or on a future agenda.
10. Turn off or mute cell phones before the meetings start. Do not accept or make phone calls unless they relate to an emergency. Request this of the public as well.
11. Meetings are held face-to-face. If a member is unable to join the meeting in person he or she should not plan on joining by phone. In extreme circumstances, however, a member may request permission of the group to join part or all of a meeting by phone. This practice is discouraged and such requests may or may not meet with approval.
12. The ORVAC makes decisions by consensus, in an effort to arrive at decisions that are better than could arise from a single perspective, and in order to avoid the win/lose polarization that characterized past ORV discussions. Utilizing the "Orange Line" protocol, the ORVAC strives whenever possible to move all decisions above the orange line, with all committee members either 1) Supporting the decision or 2) Accepting the decision, being able to live with it, or not opposing it. If we are not able to do this, decisions below the orange line involve members either 3) Needing specifically identified additional information before

being able to decide, or 4) Opposing the decision, in which case the differing viewpoints and supporting rationales are recorded in the minutes and presented to NPS staff. All recommendations of the ORVAC are subject to ground-truthing and policy review by NPS staff, in compliance with the 2000 Plan and other applicable policies. NPS will report their findings back to the ORVAC. In the case of the need for time sensitive recommendations, for which there is not ample time for a full consensus decision-making process, the ORVAC may choose to go to “conditional approval”, in which a member of the committee or the committee as a whole may agree to support the recommendation, subject to the ground-truthing and policy review by NPS staff.

B. Areas Within the Scope of Committee Discussion

Areas within the scope of committee discussion include, but are not limited to:

1. Vehicle specifications – Examples: tire pressure, vehicle types and weight, length and width of airboats
2. Development of lottery system
3. Trail alignment/re-alignment
4. Access points
5. Trail treatment techniques
6. Education/compliance programs
 - incentive programs for compliance
7. Signs/trail markings
8. Volunteer activities/programs
 - Adopt a Trail
9. Seasonal/temporal closures
10. Trail names
11. Defining visitor experience
12. Trail classifications via
 - a. vehicle type
 - b. level of difficulty
13. Conflicts in use
14. Illegal vehicle activity enforcement
15. Adaptive management
16. Primary and secondary trail recommendations
17. Relationship of ORV trails to hiking trails
18. Designated and dispersed camping
19. Relevant science, research and management
20. Other areas requested by NPS staff

C. Areas Outside the Scope of Committee Discussion

1. Re-opening the Environmental Impact Statement – Example: Exceeding the establishment of 400 miles of primary trail
2. Re-instituting dispersed use
4. Increasing number of permits
5. Non-recreational use of ORVs

D. Media Relations

1. No committee member shall make statements to the media on behalf of the Committee unless the person is specifically authorized by the Committee to be an official spokesperson, nor unless the general content of the statement is approved in advance by the Committee and the NPS.
2. Committee members are not prohibited from exercising their right to communicate with the media as individuals but will not attempt to characterize the motives, views, comments, or opinions of other members or of the Committee as a whole.
3. As the media cannot always be relied upon to accurately reflect the content, tone, and context of an interviewee's remarks, Committee members are strongly urged to use caution and restraint when choosing to exercise their right to communicate with the media as individuals.
4. Committee members will not use the media as a tool to influence committee deliberations.

E. Subcommittees

1. Establishment of subcommittees. Subcommittees and their membership may be established by the Committee, as needed, to provide a greater level of focus on particular issues and to develop information findings and/or suggestions for recommendations to present to the full Committee for discussion and action on recommendation to NPS staff. Other findings may include identification of information needs and pros/cons of different approaches.

The Committee may provide in its charge to a subcommittee whatever level of guidance it deems necessary related to the subcommittee's focus and process.

2. Subcommittee membership. Committee members are encouraged to actively participate on subcommittees, to the extent possible.

Subcommittee membership must be approved by the Committee and may be comprised of anyone with interest in and knowledge of the subject matter the subcommittee is charged with addressing. In addition to Committee members themselves, at the discretion of the Committee, membership may include, but not be limited to: members of the public; representatives of stakeholder organizations; representatives of subject-related industry; and representatives of county, state or federal agencies. In addition, members of the public may be brought in to particular subcommittee meetings to provide subject matter expertise or personal experience, without becoming subcommittee members.

The Committee will strive to assure there is balanced representation on the subcommittees.

Subcommittee members must agree to abide by the Working Principles and Ground Rules adopted by the Committee.

3. Subcommittee meeting process. Subcommittee meetings will be conducted in accordance with guidelines and ground rules established by the Committee, consistent with FACA.

Subcommittees may be convened with the assistance of the facilitation team.

4. Subcommittee products. Subcommittees are not authorized to make decisions for the Committee; their sole role is to gather information, develop options, or make recommendations, and report back to the Committee.
5. NPS provides information as requested, such as scientific expertise.

F. Public Participation at ORVAC Meetings

1. ORVAC meetings are open to the public, and times will be published in the agenda to allow the public to comment on specific topics scheduled for ORVAC consideration. These times might vary slightly from the schedule, but not significantly. There will also be a time on the agenda set aside for general public comment on any topic, although such comments should be related to ORV management in the Preserve.
2. ORVAC meetings are not public hearings, interrogations, or debates.
3. Individuals wishing to speak on topics not on the agenda will be encouraged to speak during the general comment period or communicate with the ORVAC or NPS through other means, i.e., letter, email, links on Preserve website, etc.
4. The public will not generally be allowed to speak other than during designated public comment periods. An exception may be if the ORVAC asks an individual to address the Committee on a topic for which the individual has particular knowledge, or if the person is serving as a member of an ORVAC subcommittee. Otherwise, public members of subcommittees will be considered as members of the public during ORVAC meetings and will remain in the audience.
5. Individuals should print their name on the posted list indicating which scheduled comment period(s) in which they wish to speak. When the time for a comment period arrives, the facilitator will collect the list and permit individuals to speak according to the topic at hand.
6. If more individuals wish to speak, as indicated on the list, than the time allotted on the agenda for the topic allows, the facilitator may cut off further comment or extend the comment period, at the ORVAC's discretion.
7. If all speakers who signed the list have been allowed to speak and time allows, the facilitator may ask the audience if anyone else desires to speak on the topic at hand.
8. The facilitator should not allow anyone to speak twice during a given comment period until everyone has had the opportunity to speak once, and only if time allows.
9. Speakers will only address the topic at hand and will have up to three minutes to speak. This will be strictly enforced.

10. In order to ensure that all speakers are given equal treatment, individuals will not be allowed to “yield their time” to other speakers, nor will any speaker be allowed to exceed the three-minute limit for any reason. Speakers will also not be allowed to claim a separate time slot in order to speak for someone who is not present. If someone is unable to attend the meeting, they may express their views to the subcommittee by writing, calling, or emailing.
11. If a speaker wishes his comments to be recorded verbatim for the record, he must submit them in writing. Otherwise, his comments will be paraphrased for the minutes.
12. Speakers will stick to the subject and refrain from personal attacks. The facilitator will warn the speaker if this rule is violated, and if the violation persists, will ask the speaker to cease his remarks and be seated.
13. During times reserved for public comment, speakers may only express their opinions concerning the topic and may not question the ORVAC, NPS staff, or anyone else present at the meeting. Such questions should be reserved for times before or after the meeting or during breaks. However, speakers may choose to use their time to enumerate questions they have that they have related to the topic that they would like the ORVAC to address at a future time.